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COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: MAINSTREAMING THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO ALL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Commission on the Status of Women resolution 41/6

Note by the Secretariat

Commission on the Status of Women resolution 41/6, entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system", is hereby made available to the Council for consideration during its coordination segment. The resolution is reproduced as it appears in the complete report of the Commission, which will be issued as Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 7 (E/1997/27) and will be before the Council during its general segment (agenda item 7 (c)).

GE.97-62427 (E)

Resolution 41/6 Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system*

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling the commitment made in the Beijing Platform for Action[40] to achieve equality between women and men,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 50/203 of 22 December 1995 and 51/162 of 12 December 1996,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6 of 22 July 1996, in which it was decided that the Commission on the Status of Women would have a catalytic role in mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programmes and would identify issues where United Nations system-wide coordination needed to be improved in order to assist the Council in its coordination function,

Emphasizing the need for full implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001,

Having considered the question of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system and the statement in the report of the Secretary-General that comments from the Commission on the Status of Women on mainstreaming would provide valuable input into the preparation of the report requested for the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment in 1997,[41]

1. Reaffirms that the primary goal of mainstreaming a gender perspective is the achievement of gender equality as affirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action,

2. Also reaffirms that mainstreaming a gender perspective is integral to the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality;

3. Stresses that mainstreaming does not exclude the need for targeted, women-specific and/or positive legislation, policies or programming and for gender focal points, whether at the national level or within the United Nations system;

4. Also stresses that gender mainstreaming, as an important means of achieving gender equality, requires the existence of effective national machineries for the advancement of women at the highest political level, appropriate intra- and inter-ministerial procedures and staffing, and other institutions with the mandate and capacity to broaden women's participation,

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* For the discussion, see chap. II, paras 134-138.

[41] E/CN.6/1997/2, para. 15.

5. Welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women,[42] which underscore the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective by translating the concept into practical action, including by outlining the steps required for mainstreaming;

6. Reiterates that the responsibility for mainstreaming starts at the highest levels, and in this regard, emphasizes the importance of the role of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, while stressing the need for the systematic consideration of gender mainstreaming at the highest levels;

7. Also reiterates the need to fully integrate a gender perspective into the coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits;

8. Requests the Secretary-General, in the context of the review of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women in 1998, to give due attention to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, including mainstreaming;

9. Encourages the Secretary-General to continue to give full support to coordination and policy within the United Nations for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and for the mainstreaming of a system-wide gender perspective in all activities of the United Nations, taking into account the mandates of the bodies concerned;

10. Stresses the importance of the work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality in regularly monitoring progress made in incorporating a gender perspective in institutional structures, policies and programming;

11. Also stresses the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the ongoing restructuring process of the Secretariat, and welcomes the efforts already made;

12. Encourages further cooperation between the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat and other parts of the United Nations system in order to mainstream a gender perspective in areas such as peacekeeping, political, economic and social affairs, operational activities for development, and humanitarian affairs;

13. Calls upon all bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, in the design and implementation of the programmes and assistance, to respect fully the human rights of women and the girl child;

14. Invites the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the execution of his/her mandate, to pay particular attention to the need for cooperation and coordination to ensure that the equal status of all human rights of all women and the girl child are integrated into United Nations system-wide activities, as well as to the means of achieving this, as noted in Commission on

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[42] A/51/322 and E/CN.6/1997/2.

the Status of Women resolution 40/3[43] and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/48,[44] and, in particular and in view of the critical areas of concern to be discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session, to ensure that the reports of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences are brought to the attention of the Commission to assist it in its work in the area of violence against women,

15. Stresses the need to increase cooperation and further integration of objectives and goals between the Commission on the Status of Women, other functional commissions and United Nations bodies in view of the twelve critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action;

16. Urges future development of inter-agency and inter-secretariat linkages in, inter alia, mainstreaming a gender perspective, such as the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and the joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights and the need for this plan to be considered fully by the Commission on Human Rights;

17. Also stresses the need for steps to be taken to integrate a gender perspective into human rights activities and programmes, bearing in mind the guidelines contained in the report of the expert group meeting on this issue,[45] including reporting under international human rights instruments and mechanisms;

18. Draws attention to the need to give due consideration to the human rights of women and the girl child in the preparations for the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action[46] and the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[26] and in order to do so, requests that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, other relevant rapporteurs and working groups, as appropriate, and treaty body experts be invited to participate in the discussion at the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the critical areas of concern, "Human rights of women" and "The girl child";

19. Welcomes the note by the Secretary-General on agreed conclusions 1996/1 adopted by the Economic and Social Council on coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication,[47] in particular, its emphasis on mainstreaming a gender perspective in all United Nations activities for poverty eradication, at all levels;

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[43] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 6 (E/1996/26), chap. I, sect. C.2.

[44] Ibid., Supplement No. 3 (E/1996/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[45] E/CN.4/1996/105, annex.

[46] Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

[47] E/CN.6/1997/6.

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20. Encourages the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment to evaluate the steps taken by the United Nations system to implement the recommendations in its agreed conclusions 1996/1 on mainstreaming a gender perspective in United Nations activities for poverty eradication, including the use of data disaggregated by sex, review of statistical indicators, gender impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and gender-sensitive training, and to present recommendations on further steps to ensure a common United Nations system wide approach to mainstreaming a gender perspective in all United Nations development activities, including those of United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies;

21. Emphasizes the critical role that the resident coordinator system plays in ensuring that gender perspectives are mainstreamed in the country programmes of United Nations operational agencies;

22. Requests that the United Nations Development Fund for Women work to bring its experience in programme countries to the attention of other organizations in the United Nations system with a view to strengthening the gender perspective of development programmes in developing countries and increasing synergy with other United Nations organizations;

23. Requests the Secretary-General, in his report for the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session on the thematic issues of violence against women, women and armed conflict, the human rights of women, and the girl child, to draw special attention to the full participation of women in all aspects of humanitarian assistance programmes, including their design, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, drawing upon the reports of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system concerning humanitarian assistance and other reports as necessary;

24. Stresses the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the individual programmes of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 as adopted by the General Assembly[46] and encourages the Committee for Programme and Coordination to examine this issue when reviewing the medium-term plan;

25. Emphasizes that the implementation of the Platform for Action requires the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the design, planning and implementation of all policies and programmes and administrative procedures in the United Nations system, and in this regard, notes with appreciation the conclusion of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality that mainstreaming is a responsibility of the United Nations system as a whole and of all staff in all policy and programme areas and in decision-making;

26. Encourages the Economic and Social Council, at its coordination segment in 1997, to develop specific recommendations for mainstreaming a gender perspective into all United Nations system activities, including by:

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[46] General Assembly resolution 51/219.

(a) Assessing the achievement and the obstacles encountered in mainstreaming a gender perspective at the intergovernmental level, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the regional and functional commissions, and in the United Nations system, including the Secretariat, the specialized agencies and all operational activities, including those at the field level, and making specific recommendations thereon;

(b) Encouraging the development of methodologies and practical tools for mainstreaming a gender perspective and for monitoring progress thereon on a regular basis, especially at senior levels, through, inter alia, performance indicators and evaluation, mechanisms for accountability, impact analysis and identifying best practices;

(c) Stressing the importance of further developing and improving training on gender issues, inter alia, through evaluation of training practices, in order to strengthen expertise on gender issues;

(d) Stressing the need to draw on the considerable experience and expertise that exists within the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and other gender units/focal points to provide advice, and encouraging efforts to develop and enhance cooperation and linkages between these units and other parts of the system, including with the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, in order to broaden responsibility for the implementation of mainstreaming;

(e) Emphasizing the importance of achieving a gender balance and need to implement recommendations and goals already established to increase women's access to senior levels of decision-making in the United Nations system, including in matters relating to peacekeeping, preventive diplomacy and economic and social development, taking into account equitable geographical representation in conformity with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, as a key component of mainstreaming a gender perspective;

(f) Underscoring the importance of working with non-governmental organizations and women's groups, and developing partnerships to build capacity for progress in mainstreaming;

(g) Calling upon United Nations departments and bodies, in the context of preparation of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 and in budget decisions in general, to take full account of the need to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and to mainstream a gender perspective in their programmes, in line with the recommendations of the Platform, and to identify clearly those activities that are necessary to achieve that objective;

(h) Calling for adequate human and financial resources, including resources for the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, in order to carry out all tasks foreseen in the Beijing Platform for Action;

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27. Stresses that mainstreaming a gender perspective into all United Nations system activities is an ongoing process requiring regular assessment and commitment at the highest level, and further stresses, in this context, the need for effective follow-up throughout the United Nations system to the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council coordination segment;

28. Urges that the Economic and Social Council specifically integrate a gender perspective into its deliberations on economic and social issues, including the high-level segment;

29. Requests Governments to include information on progress in mainstreaming when submitting their reports on national action plans for the implementation of the commitments contained in the Beijing Platform for Action, which are due by 30 May 1997, as input for the preparation of the synthetic report of the Secretary-General in 1998;

30. Requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the present resolution.